

# National Rural Education Association



Guidelines and NREA Writing Composition Rubric  
for the

## **2009 ESSAY CONTEST**

Sponsored By: The National Rural Education Association  
Foundation



## GUIDELINES

### National Rural Education Association 2009 Essay Contest

#### ELIGIBILITY

This essay contest is open to all students in grades three to twelve who attend a rural school.

#### PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded to the first place winner and runner-up in each Grade Cluster:

Grades 3-5: Elementary Grades	6-8: Middle/Junior High	Grades 9-12: Senior High
1st place = \$250	1st place = \$400	1st place = \$400
Runner-up = \$100	Runner-up = \$200	Runner-up = \$200

#### NREA WRITING COMPOSITION RUBRICS

##### RATIONALE

Classroom teachers and students need a uniform system to guide development of a written product that may be recognized by a national organization as an exemplary composition. **NREA** essay readers need a consistent tool to judge the value of essays based on the same criteria.

##### RUBRICS

The rubrics are intended to be used as a scoring guide for all compositions.

##### CRITERIA

The criteria selected focus on IDEAS and CONTENT, ORGANIZATION, and CONVENTIONS as three of the traits of effective writing

##### GOAL

To provide **NREA** essay readers, classroom teachers, and students the criteria that will be used to score all essays; Grade Clusters 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

##### CUT SCORES

The cut scores for all entries to be submitted are: Grades 3-5 — 30/34  
Grades 6-12 — 32/36

#### THE WRITING PROMPT FOR ALL GRADES FOR 2009 IS AS FOLLOWS:

Think of what is really important about your school. Think of something that you want to remember forever. Write about "How my Rural School Will Change in the Next 25 Years" so that your readers can picture in their minds what it is that makes your school special to you.

Schools should pre-screen entries according to the criteria tables and select up to five quality entries for each Grade Cluster. No *more than five entries per Grade Cluster will be accepted from any one school.*

# 2009 NREA Writing Composition Rubric

## IDEAS AND CONTENT

*0 = not included 1 = partially included 2 = fully included*

The student composition:

CRITERIA	POINTS
Has a main idea that is clear and focused	
Includes all appropriate supporting details	
Clearly and accurately addresses the topic	
Explores and explains the topic, although developmental details may be occasionally out of balance with the main idea	
Provides connections and insights, although they may not be fully developed	
Presents observations that may be general or specific, but are related to the topic	
<b>TOTAL</b>	
(6-12th GRADE ONLY) The student writing style is either a visual graphic (e.g., feelings, senses, analogies) <b>OR</b> a concise, linear writing style	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	

## ORGANIZATION

*0 = not addressed 1 = partially addressed 2 = fully addressed*

The student composition:

CRITERIA	POINTS
Provides a strong, inviting beginning that draws the reader into the text	
Has an order that is strong and leads the reader through the text, including a clear beginning, middle, and ending	
Includes effective transitions that connect ideas and details within the paragraphs	
Includes appropriate pacing and flow	
Develops a body of work that is easy to follow with details that fit where placed	
Incorporates basically sound paragraph breaks that reinforce organizational structure	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	

## CONVENTIONS

*0 = not presented 1 = partially presented 2 = fully presented*

The student composition:

CRITERIA	POINTS
Is developed in such a manner that penmanship, grammar, and spelling do not hinder understanding the work	
Uses grade-level appropriate grammar	
Incorporates strong, effective use of punctuation that guides the reader through the text; end-of sentence punctuation and internal punctuation is appropriate	
Uses correct capitalization, errors, if any, are minor	
Uses spelling that is correct, especially on common words	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL Grades 3-5</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL Grades 6-12</b>	

## FORMAT

The length of the essays shall be up to 250 words for an elementary entry, and up to 500 words for a middle/junior or senior high school entry. Entries will be judged according to the **NREA Writing Composition Rubric**. Each school must pre-screen entries according to the **NREA Writing Composition Rubrics** to determine local cut scores. Only entries that meet cut scores are eligible for the NREA Essay Contest.

A statement from the school principal must accompany the entries from each school to verify each essay is the original work of each student and was written during school time under the supervision of a teacher.

Entries will be judged by the Teacher Activities Committee of the National Rural Education Association. Entries must be typed double-spaced or written in ink on only one side of the paper. Neither the author's name nor the school name should appear on the essay itself. **Paper clip** a separate cover sheet to each entry which includes the following information: **Do not use staples.** An essay missing any of the following information will not be considered.

- (1.) Full name of student
- (2.) Address and phone number of the student
- (3.) **Grade and level** of student (i.e. 6th grade - middle school; 6th grade - elementary)
- (4.) Full name of school
- (5.) Address and phone number of the school
- (6.) Full name of the teacher

**DEADLINE**

Entries must be postmarked by **March 15, 2009.**

Winners will be announced June 1, 2009.

**Further information can be obtained**  
by calling 765-494-0086 or email:  
**jhill@purdue.edu**

**MAIL ONE COPY OF EACH ENTRY TO:**

Essay Contest  
National Rural Education Association  
ATTN: Dr. John Hill, Purdue University,  
Beering Hall of Arts and Education 5129  
100 N. University Street, West Lafayette,  
IN 47908